DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 021 SP 036 735

AUTHOR Dorsch, Nina G.
TITLE Conflict and Collegiality: A Dialectic of Community-Building in an Interdisciplinary Teaching Team's First Year.
PUB DATE 12 Apr 96
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS English; Grade 9; *Group Dynamics; High Schools; Inclusive Schools; *Integrated Curriculum; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Interpersonal Relationship; Learning Disabilities; Physical Sciences; Regular and Special Education Relationship; *Teacher Collaboration; *Team Teaching; Teamwork; Thematic Approach; World History

ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a reexamination of data from implementation in 1993-94 of the "Connections" program, a voluntary interdisciplinary program option for ninth-grade students in Cedar City (Ohio). Data gathered from the four teachers (representing English, Physical Science, World History, and Learning Disabilities) and 80 students (including 10 with learning disabilities) included observations of classes and meetings, teacher interviews, and implementation documents. Anecdotes of triumphs and crises the teachers experienced are shared, as are details of the evolving interpersonal and interprofessional dynamics between teachers attempting to transcend their traditional curricular isolation. The experiences of the Connections teachers are compared with existing literature on what can be done to facilitate such team bonding and cooperation, including how conflict can be used to highlight important issues that might otherwise go unaddressed. (Contains 13 references.) (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 397 021

CONFLICT AND COLLEGIALITY: A DIALECTIC OF COMMUNITY-BUILDING IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING TEAM'S FIRST YEAR

by

Nina G. Dorsch
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115-2885

Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association
Annual Meeting, New York City, April 12, 1996

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
N. Dorsch

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP036735

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Traditionally, schools have honored a view of teaching as a largely individual craft. The current wave of education reform challenges that view. Initiatives such as site-based management, inclusion, and interdisciplinary curriculum all envision a departure from the traditional isolation of the individual classroom teacher. Within the reform discourse, much attention is given to the hallmarks characterizing effective implementation of such innovations --- what might be termed the three C's: community, collaboration, and collegiality. Less prominent within the reform discourse is a fourth C which often accompanies implementation: conflict.

In listing what he considers the basic lessons about the change process in education, Fullan (1993) includes the maxim "Problems are our friends" (p. 126). Viewing problems not only as inevitable, but also as integral to substantive change efforts, Fullan deduces that how problems are met (whether through "shallow coping" or deeper probing) is indicative of an innovation's effectiveness and success. Similarly, a Deweyan perspective of democratic community involves building reciprocal relationships, making space for differences through a process of dynamic, deliberative communication which fosters the growth of both the individual members and the community (Kahne, 1994). Both perspectives suggest that if they are to be successful, educational reform efforts to build collaborative communities must take into account the role that conflict plays in the process.

Within economic and organizational systems, Hirschman (1970) suggests that conflict is resolved through either exit, voice, or loyalty. For Hirschman, loyalty is the preferred option --- making creativity and attempts at improvement in the face of uncertainty more likely. This notion of loyalty seems to offer an approximation of the synthesis a dialectic of conflict

and collegiality might create. But does Hirschman's triad operate in the dynamics of educational reform? And if so, how?

Addressing these questions, this paper will focus on the experiences of one teaching team as they implemented an interdisciplinary program option, "Connections," for ninth grade students at Cedar City High School in southern Ohio. Specifically, this paper will examine the dialectic of collegiality and conflict as both occurred during this teaching team's first year. Implications for policy planning will be considered.

Methods/Data Sources

This paper is based on a reexamination of the data from a study of the implementation of the "Connections" program during the 1993-1994 school year (Dorsch, 1995). Encompassing the content areas of English, Physical Science, and World History, Connections derived its name from its interdisciplinary goal of designing instruction so that students would come to understand the interrelatedness, or connections, among subject areas. A voluntary curriculum option, Connections was conceived as serving a heterogeneous cohort of 80 students, including all ninth grade students (10) identified as having learning disabilities. The four teachers who comprised the teaching team represented each of the subject areas and special education.

Employing the methods of data gathering and analysis associated with qualitative case study research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Merriam, 1988), the data set includes observations, interviews, and documents. Observations included: (1) summer planning meetings; (2) the Connections block, including the first period common planning time and the three instructional periods throughout the year; (3) meetings; and (4) extended teacher planning sessions during the year. In addition to many informal interviews, semistructured

conversations/interviews were conducted on a regular basis with: (1) the principal; (2) the assistant superintendent for curriculum; and (3) the Connections teachers. In addition, each teacher responded in writing to a set of year-end reflective questions and elaborated on their responses in exit interviews. Documents included: (1) agendas from meetings; (2) internal school communications; (3) local press coverage; and (4) classroom artifacts. In this paper's interpretation of this data set, analysis focused most intently on coding categories concerned with the teachers' perceptions of their work and the events they experienced during initial implementation of the program.

Findings

Two overarching themes emerged. The teachers clearly identified "epiphany" moments (Denzin, 1989) which, in Dickensian terms, could be distinguished as "the best of times" and "the worst of times." The former were associated with collegiality, and the latter with conflict. How those distinct themes interwove as a dialectic in the process of community-building within the Connections teaching team is the heart of this paper's findings.

Collegiality in the "Best of Times."

Stories of "the best of times" became part of a Connections "saga" (Clark, 1972). When the Connections teachers were asked to explain the program to persons outside the Connections circle, they invariably included particular tales of success.

The Romeo and Juliet Tale. First told to Tim (the special education teacher) and Sheryl (the English teacher), the story was repeated by Mrs. Archer at a March meeting of the Board of Education:

> My son has a learning disability. I was skeptical at first. At the parent meeting I heard parents of

> honors kids concerned about their children being in with LD students. I thought, "What's going to happen to my son?" One day I came in from work. Nathan had Romeo and Juliet in his hand, and he said, "This is so cool; have you read it?" I asked Nathan, "What do you like about Connections?" He said, "The special projects." I asked if he liked working with honors kids. He said, "It's really neat." (March 21, 1994)

Mrs. Archer's story was about a change she noticed in her son. Nathan's delightfully unanticipated interest in reading (of all things) Romeo and Juliet, was reflective of themes within a second best of times tale.

Coming Through. The Renaissance Fair marked the culmination of Connections' first semester. In a pattern of nature typical of southern Ohio, the better part of January's first week of school was cancelled for what truly were "calamity days." As welcome as the announcements of "snow days" normally are, the Coming Through Tale was an amazing contradiction. On the first snow day, several anxious parents and students called the principal's office, wondering if the fair would be merely postponed or suffer cancellation. On the reset date, yet another snow day forced another postponement. As desolate and untravelled as Cedar City's roads were, the Cedar City telephone lines were abuzz with activity. The Connections teachers conferred with each other and administrators in a series of calls and decided on a plan. Each teacher would call the students in his or her advisory group with the news that the fair would indeed be held on the exam day that encompassed the Connections block.

On January 12, the Connections students and their teachers journeyed the half mile to the junior high auditorium to set up for the Renaissance Fair. In various states of medieval garb, students set up their display areas, including a replica of a castle that dominated one end of the room.

While Dan (the science teacher), appeared in standard teaching habiliment, Bernie (the history teacher), Sheryl, and Tim sported full medieval regalia. Those junior high students and teachers who entered the transformed room met a host of Renaissance characters and reproductions. As Sheryl, Bernie, and Tim toured the room, they required each student (or group of students) to present and explain their exhibit, to evidence their status as "mini-experts" in their chosen topic. As could be expected, a few students had obviously engaged in rather slap-dash efforts. But the vast majority had just as clearly expended great time and effort to rise to the occasion. They had "come through." Other "coming through" tales became prominent in Connections lore. Stories of students rising to the occasion were recounted with pride. Most often these tales were associated with projects, especially those that crossed disciplines and whose rubrics had been devised by the Connections teachers collaboratively.

As successful as the Renaissance Fair was when it was finally held, the Coming Through Tale was also about what happened during the snow-day telephone calls to students. As Sheryl told the Board of Education in March, "Kids were upset at being out on snow days." Each of the teachers talked with parents pleased about their child's level of excitement and engagement with Connections in general and the Renaissance Fair project in particular. Each of the teachers talked with students eager to display their projects and disappointed at the postponement. In his year-end reflections, Tim wrote, "The Renaissance Fair I thought was a turning point for many students academically." Tim's thought points to the predominant theme of a third best of times tale.

The Emma Lazarus Tale. This tale's title derives from the poem, by

Emma Lazarus associated with the Statue of Liberty. Like the poem that invites the "homeless, tempest-tossed" to the "golden door" of the American Dream, this tale in the Connections saga was concerned with access and opportunity.

Not tied to one specific event, the Emma Lazarus Tale took many forms. At a February meeting with the principal and assistant superintendent, Bernie's version was encapsulated as he remarked,

> Some [of the students] we were told by the eighth grade [teachers] were absolute zeroes have done well. . . The good has been, we've pulled some kids up.

Tim's version focused on a dimension of the tale that was especially important to him: "For the most part, LD kids have been able to grasp and take off. We have been pleased with their progress." Sheryl's version was implicit in her comments to potential second-year Connections students, "We like lots of well-rounded people; you don't have to be a 'good' student." Dan's version, though rarely recounted, centered on one underlying factor that all of his colleagues agreed contributed to the tale's significance: flexibility. While Dan viewed flexibility in terms of the variable scheduling options available within the three-period Connections block, the other Connections teachers tended to view flexibility in instructional terms.

Whether pointing to the use of parallel texts, audiotapes, differentiated tests, field trips aligned with classroom topics, videotapes that appealed to visual learners, or to simulations that required exploration and application of key concepts, the Emma Lazarus Tale explicitly linked student academic success to teaching strategies that made learning accessible to all students. As Bernie commented, "We need to 'hook' them" (January 25, 1994). "Hooking" students, encouraging them to cross the threshold of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"golden door" through methods and projects that were designed to both engage student interest and enable student success, was the Emma Lazarus Tale's theme.

Themes within the best-of-times revealed a cycle that was a key dynamic in the evolution of collegiality within the Connections teaching team. As students "came through" in response to adventurous teaching, the teachers experienced feelings of being rewarded, leading to the teachers' increased commitment to student success and their willingness to take further pedagogical risks together. In the best of times (most notably during common planning period sessions devoted to cross-disciplinary projects), the interdependence, reciprocity, and democratic communication that mark collegiality had clearly been created. Sustaining such collegiality proved more difficult.

Conflict in the "Worst of Times"

Other stories, not shared with those outside the Connections circle, centered on "the worst of times." Those times were moments of crisis, moments in a continuing story of difference. The science teacher's practice reflected an orientation to students, teaching, and subject matter which came to be seen as incompatible with the stances manifested by the other three members of the teaching team. This dimension of difference remained unacknowledged until (at three distinct points during the year) it attained what might be termed a critical mass.

The Lab Book Crisis Tale. By the second week of school, Dan had distributed his science syllabus in which the specifications for a required lab book were detailed. Because his requirements were quite specific, Dan offered the students two options. They could find and purchase lab books

on their own, or they could "place an order" and Dan would purchase lab books at the university where he was taking graduate courses. Several students took him up on his offer. Weeks passed and a sizeable minority had neither taken advantage of Dan's offer nor purchased appropriate lab books on their own. Further complicating the matter, Dan would not grade lab reports until they were recorded in an appropriate lab book. Accordingly, a significant number of students were "missing" grades.

Despite planning sessions at which teachers voiced concerns about students who were behind in their work, no planning time discussion of the lab book issue occurred during September. Even during mid-term week, the fifth week of school when teachers issued first quarter progress reports for those students whose academic status was of concern, the emergent lab book crisis was not a point of discussion.

The lab book gridlock was a topic, indeed a central topic, during the common planning period on the first of October. Bernie began, "I want to raise an issue for the group to discuss." Speaking of the "10 to 15 kids we're not reaching all the time," Bernie wanted to create time to help those students who were struggling. Tim nodded, saying, "Most are in Science. They don't have lab books, and they're not following scientific procedure." But Bernie saw a larger issue as well, pointing out that "We have two things to solve." He explained,

> We need to get closure on the lab books somehow. About ten [students] are starting to go back to an us-them mentality . . . It's starting to frustrate us, make us frustrated with the kids. It's defeating the purpose of what we're trying to do with this class. I was thinking about what was going good and what wasn't. The common denominator seemed to be the lack of a science lab book.

Dan acknowledged, "Maybe I should have taken up papers, but then I'd grade

them twice." Checking his records, Dan found that 22 of the 80 Connections students were still missing lab books. Tim offered to go to a local flea market and "pick up about 30." But that was the weekend that Tim's father died.

Eventually, all Connections students had lab books, but the crisis remained in memory, both short-term and long-term. In the short term, the incident had made Dan the self-acknowledged "bad guy" of the first quarter (Interview, October 19, 1993). In the long term, it portended the other tales that comprise the worst of times trilogy.

The Conversion and Backsliding Tale. The "conversion" portion of this tale is the story of the teachers' response to two perceived problems: a level of connectedness among their subject areas which did not meet their hopes and expectations, and a failure to ensure success for the full range of Connections' heterogeneous students. The "backsliding" portion of the tale recounts words, actions, and events which affected the teachers' ability to implement their second semester "conversion" plan.

As the first quarter gave way to the second, Bernie, Tim, and Sheryl more often expressed a frustration with the team's seeming inability to "connect" science with English and history. Increasingly, they saw Dan as "unplugged" (a Connections term denoting lack of content relation). In mid-December, Bernie called a meeting of the Connections teachers. He asked that I not sit in on the meeting so that the interaction might be a little "freer." Later that morning Bernie told me, "You could have stayed for this morning's meeting. No blood-letting happened." As Sheryl informed me,

> The meeting produced no great changes, but we're looking at how we could structure second semester to include science better. We'll each make a list of key things to be covered, then meet to see if

thematic groupings suggest themselves.

True to their word, Bernie and Sheryl developed the lists they hoped would dovetail with the units within Dan's course outline. When the team gathered during the Christmas break, Bernie began the discussion:

> We need to make an effort to connect better. We need to modify the curriculum for the general kids to have a better chance while enhancing it for honors . . . I'm not sure we're meeting the needs of all our kids.

Bernie's remark articulated two dimensions of change the teachers envisioned for Connections' second semester.

One dimension dealt with what to do with those students who, as Tim termed them, "don't like themselves." As the team considered ways to enhance and motivate student success, Dan outlined a possible contract-for-grades schemata. Bernie looked over what Dan had written and said, "I like that; that's good. But let me play devil's advocate." Recounting his experience in attempting implementation of such a contract, Bernie admitted that he found himself "compromising" the standard and "helping" all to at least meet the criteria for a "C." Dan, after pondering the idea of "contracting up or down," asked, "How is this different from what I've been doing all along?"

The second dimension dealt with the choice and sequence of the second semester's thematic units. Dan's planned instruction on atomic structure suggested a unifying theme of "structures," one that would include grammatical structures and political/ideological structures (e.g., nationalism, imperialism, communism). The next topic on Dan's syllabus was chemical change. In the discussion that followed, "change" became "reactions," a theme that both Bernie and Sheryl felt would add a new and exciting dimension to their chosen content (To Kill a Mockingbird and World War II). For the year's last unit, the teachers agreed upon a "future" unit,

one that would allow tie-ins among history (the United Nations, third world issues, a global economy), English (Fahrenheit 451 and the genre of science fiction), and science (technological advances). At the meeting's conclusion, the following exchange occurred:

> Sheryl: I think thematics is the way we should go.
> Dan: I thought that's what we've been doing all along.

The thematic unit plan had potential. But another event occurred on January 11, one that was a partial catalyst for the "backsliding" portion of this tale. Quite unexpectedly, Dan had been assigned a student teacher, Jim Pelfrey, for the second semester. While Dan remained an active presence in his classroom during much of Jim's sojourn, his presence during common planning periods became more distanced. Having a student teacher who assumed (or was perceived as expected to assume) primary planning and teaching duties, Dan apparently deferred to Jim as the science member of the team. Yet Jim was slow to insinuate himself into common planning period conversations, and he was never really accepted as a teaching team member.

The second semester brought another change that was also part of the "backsliding" portion of this tale. As Sheryl planned her "structures" unit around grammar, Connections' heterogeneity posed a problem. The Connections students' backgrounds in grammar varied with their tracking designation. So it came to be that for the several weeks that grammar was Connections' English focus, the designations of honors, academic, and general (rather than heterogeneous advisory groups) became the grouping mechanism for rotation among the teachers.

"Backsliding" events kept the "conversion" plans from being fully realized. Ultimately, "backsliding" led to the third tale in the conflict trilogy, the Vision Thing Tale.

The Vision Thing Tale. By the year's end, differences within the teaching team had become ever more visible. In the Lab Crisis Tale and the Conversion and Backsliding Tale, the teachers had begun the work of acknowledging their differences and reconciling those differences with the emerging Connections vision characteristic of the "best of times." But their work had not been completed by year's end.

When the four teachers responded to my end-of-the-year "Reflecting on Connections" questions, their words revealed differences that remained.

> Tim: The "connection" with the team members was very solid in the English and World History areas . . . For the most part, the area of science did not "connect" as all of us would have liked . . . The area of science not only was difficult for them [students] academically, but it also became a personality conflict between student and teacher.
>
> Sheryl: My advice to a new group would be to try to be "like-minded" in the area of levels or tracking . . . I think another drawback was not making a science connection on a regular basis.
>
> Bernie: [Advice to new Connections-like teachers]
> (1) Communicate
> (2) Plan over summer
> (3) Go thematic units
> (4) Make program accessible to all but then follow thru (sic)
> (5) Ensure success
> [If you had it all to do over again]
> We have to delineate science to make it accessible for all --- more projects.
>
> Dan: [Advice to new Connections-like teachers]
> Get together on certain things like tardies, discipline, late policies. Put together a syllabus or contract for the kids and parents explaining what the course is about and what is expected.
> [How did your teaching change?]
> Very little actually --- which may or may not be good. We pretty much just put together existing courses --- not really the way we (I) originally envisioned Connections.

The spring's private reflections and conversations became a quasi-open topic

during the planning time of June 3, 1994. While Dan was on an errand, Bernie, Tim, and Sheryl began to discuss plans for Connections' second year.

> Bernie: What's the agenda? Want to talk about potential projects, themes?
> Sheryl: We need to talk about Dan, about whether he'll buy into this.
> Bernie: I'll do that. [Pause] Solo?
> Sheryl and Tim: Yeah.
> Bernie: I think the way to approach it is from a philosophical basis. We need to make science accessible to all students . . . If you don't want to make the commitment, then let's bail out now and find someone else.
> Sheryl: It's not like abandoning ship. It's the vision thing.

On the morning of the "teacher work day" that marked the official end of the school year, the Connections teachers gathered one last time. After some discussion about supply orders for the next year, Dan was called to the office. With Dan out of the room, Sheryl asked Bernie about his "solo" conversation with Dan. Offering no details, Bernie told Sheryl and Tim that he had talked to Dan for "about an hour." Bernie also revealed that he had talked to the principal about the situation, and that the principal planned to call Dan later in the week to "check about next year's teaching assignment." As I left the building on that last day of the Connections year, Dan's future as part of the Connections community had come down to "the vision thing."

Discussion

The tales of best of times collegiality and worst of times conflict intertwine in a point-counterpoint (or thesis-antithesis) relationship. Within the complex dynamics of this relationship, and most particularly at the three crisis points of conflict, the notions of facework (Goffman, 1967; Cupach & Metts, 1994) and exit, voice and loyalty (Hirschman, 1970) converged.

The construct of "facework" as conceptualized by Goffman (1967) involves an understanding which operates in social relationships. In order to sustain positive interaction, Goffman proposed, people tacitly abide by a cooperative principle whereby they support each other in maintaining "face" --- a socially situated conception of self. Effective facework fosters mutual respect and so is integral to managing the challenges and dilemmas of relationships. Effective facework, then, could be expected to be important in the process of forging community within a teaming relationship like Connections. When conflicts arise, the facework process has two phases: an initial encounter in which issues of blame are controlled, and a post-encounter phase designed to restore the relationship (Cupach & Metts, 1994). In the Connections experience, the dynamics of both phases of facework were evident, particularly during the worst of times.

Apparently observing what Rosenholtz (1989) has termed the norms of mutual noninterference and avoidance of conflict, the Connections teachers initially delayed common planning period discussions about topics which would expose differences and threaten face. This delay can be seen as both expected and strategic. Hirschman (1970) noted that it is common for there to be a relatively wide tolerance for lapses or deterioration in quality before voice is exercised. Moreover, if, as Hirschman asserts, the choice to exercise voice is tempered by both the uncertainties of improvement and an assessment of its cost, the Connections' teachers' delay in confronting difference (particularly initially with the lab book crisis) served a purpose. To confront differences and disagreements early in the school year would have threatened the Connections teachers' emergent and still fragile loyalty to both the program and to each other.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Another concept associated with facework, backstage area, relates directly to the development of a relationship culture of loyalty to fellow teaching team members. In Connections, the nature and design of the program meant that the four teachers would come to share a far greater portion of their private (backstage) space than in their former individual practices. Seeing more of each others' private as well as public personas had a double-edged effect. While sharing backstage space could facilitate the interdependence characteristic of community, sharing increasing amounts of backstage space also made each teacher more vulnerable to loss of face.

Consequently, during the first months of team meetings the Connections teachers had devoted considerable time to establishing a sense of commonality and trust through strategies of "affinity seeking" and "uncertainty reduction" (Cupach & Metts, 1994, p. 41). Meeting in each others' homes for summer planning sessions and an early-established ritual of sharing coffee and conversation during their first period common planning time allowed for reciprocal self-disclosure and gaining knowledge of each other as trusting and trustable. Against such a backdrop, backstage space becomes less guarded, the relationship buffers the risk of face loss, and there is a measure of freedom to exercise voice. Yet in doing so, Bernie broached the topic of lab books gingerly, carefully couching his comments in terms of a program ideal (avoiding an "us-them mentality" in the teacher-student relationship) and avoiding any attribution of blame. Once the initial encounter had confronted the lab book situation, the post-encounter work of restoring relationships began. The teachers agreed that they would not again make the mistake of not including a lab book among the items included in student fees, and the episode faded from planning period conversations.

Similarly, facework was clearly evident in the initial encounter request that I not observe the meeting in which the nonconnectedness of science was raised. Only when that meeting had resulted in "no blood-letting" did the process of conversion continue. The working-out process of conversion attempted to wed the voicing of perceived problems with social support. Buttressed by the best-of-times experiences of the first semester, voicing the need for a realignment of the second semester was born of loyalty to an ever-more-clearly-defined vision of what Connections could and should be. Sharing ideas and stories that illuminated possible solutions without directly giving advice, the Connections teachers skirted the unequal power arrangement implicit in advice-giving and agreed upon a thematic plan for the remainder of the year. However, the post-encounter work of mending relationships did not assume the same form as with the lab book crisis.

As "backsliding" events illustrated, facework now often took on the form of disengagement strategies. One such strategy, avoidance, took the form of "strategic individualism" (Hargreaves, 1993) as the science teacher more frequently absented or otherwise occupied himself during common planning periods. The unexpected assignment of a student teacher to the science teacher during the second semester served to make this withdrawal more complete. By the year's end, differences had not so much been resolved as repressed, and talk among the three teachers whose orientations were compatible turned to questioning the science teacher's continued membership on the teaching team. The option they discussed was not so much exit (as Hirschman describes exit) as expulsion. Understanding what led to such a drastic step requires attention to loyalty.

Seeking affinity and bases for personal connection amid the uncertainties

of implementing an innovation established a sense of commonality and trust. It was this relationship that was at the heart of Connections' best-of-times. Indeed, in the merging of practice that distinguished the best-of-times, the cycle of success assumed the status of a Connections culture --- in effect, a Connections "vision." This vision of what Connections could be, and what Connections was during the best-of-times, came into sharp focus especially when that vision was threatened by unresolved conflict. In other words, as Fullan (1993) observes, vision emerges in the crucible of problem-solving. Within that same crucible, the decision to exercise voice rather than exit rests on the perception of how effectively voice can exert influence to get the organization "back on track" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 37). For much of the second semester, the occasions when voice might be brought to bear had been limited. Dan's disengagement absented him from many common planning periods, and such conversations would potentially have been face-threatening in the student teacher's presence. So, despite a few shining moments, voice had not been able to effect a complete conversion. Yet as the school year drew to a close, Bernie, Tim, and Sheryl agreed that one last conversation was necessary to ascertain whether Dan would make a commitment to --- in effect declare loyalty to --- the Connections vision as they had come to understand it. If Dan could not make that commitment, it would not be seen as "abandoning ship." Rather, offering Dan the option to exit was, in a sense, extending him the choice of what Hirschman (1970) called "exit with loyalty" (p. 87). Importantly, in the minds of the three Connections teachers, an exit with loyalty would also be an exit without loss of face.

Within the exit/voice/loyalty matrix, "the likelihood of voice [as

opposed to exit] increases with the degree of loyalty" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 77). In the Connections experience, loyalty was engendered and maintained by two conditions. The first condition lay in the belief system or vision embodied in the best-of-times tales. The second condition lay in a relationship among the teachers created and cemented by facework. Both conditions were necessary; neither condition was sufficient in and of itself.

Implications for Policy Planning

Central to many of the reforms proposed to democratize schools is the notion of teacher empowerment. Essential to such empowerment is the development of teachers' knowledge of professional community (Lichtenstein, McLaughlin, & Knudsen, 1991). If teachers are to breach their traditional isolation and undertake such reforms, policymakers must take into account the dynamics and requirements of community-building. The Connections experience suggests some of the dynamics and requirements to be considered.

When opportunities/structures allow and encourage teachers' access to each others' here-to-fore private practice, conflicts will surely surface --- as they did in the Connections experience. But when these inevitable conflicts are mediated by loyalty, the Connections experience suggests that conflict <u>can</u> serve as a counterpoint that brings critical issues into sharp relief and so permits the work of addressing them to begin. Loyalty activates voice and holds exit at bay (Hirschman, 1970). Loyalty, then, is the catalyst which bridges conflict and collegiality.

If the dialectic of conflict and collegiality is to operate to create community, policies must contribute to creating and maintaining both loyalty and the process of voice. Hirschman (1970) offers three propositions that might inform such policies. First, he posits that voice is more likely when

mechanisms exist through which communicating dissatisfaction are readily available. For the Connections teachers, the first period common planning time was such a mechanism. While powerful norms within the school culture and pressing time demands mitigated against as full a use of this mechanism as might have been possible and desirable, without such a structure, the Connections teachers might not have seen voice as a viable option. Policy-makers need to consider how voice can find an outlet for its expression.

Second, Hirschman posits that voice is an art, one that can atrophy or fail to develop when exit is an easily-exercised option. Hirschman argues that voice is a residual of exit in that it is at times the only option when exit is not available, and that nonexiters are often the source of voice. Had exit been perceived as a probability, through their own demands for (or through administration-initiated intervention to) changing Connections' staffing, the first crisis might well have been the last. But resolution would have come at a price --- no process of democratic dialogue would have occurred, and thus no opportunity for community to develop. The Cedar City administrators' decision to "step back and let teachers get their feet wet, to make mistakes, to learn" (Interview with principal) and to "find a middle ground between administrative obtrusiveness and benign neglect" (Interview with assistant superintendent) proved to be a disincentive for exit and a mobilization of bias toward voice. Such an administrative policy merits consideration.

Third, Hirschman posits that there must be time for an organization to respond to the pressures of its internal voices. Voice alerts an organization to lapses, deterioration, and/or dissatisfaction and prods members into a creativity-requiring course of action. But correcting and

reversing problems happens no more instantaneously than their appearance and detection. Moreover, once conflict has arisen and been voiced, sufficient time must be given for the facework necessary to restore relationships to collegiality. For Connections, the crises of voice-creative action-facework interspersed with shining moments of success that validated loyalty --- a cycle interrupted for intermission, not denouement, by the end of the school year. For practical reasons, policies are often a function of the rhythms of the school year. The Connections experience suggests that such practicality may not serve the needs of the realities of community-building. Facework, loyalty, voice, and exit interweave in a continuous dialectic of conflict and collegiality. The Connections experience suggests that community, like vision, is ever emergent --- facilitated, but not ordained, by policy.

References

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Clark, B. R. (1972). The organizational saga in higher education. Administrative Science Quarterly, 17(2), 178-184.

Cupach, W. R. & Metts, S. (1994). Facework. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). Interpretive interactionism. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dorsch, N. (1995). Making "Connections": A teaching team's journey toward collegial community. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Miami University, Oxford, OH.

Fullan, M. (1993). Innovation, reform, and restructuring strategies. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Challenges and achievements of American education: 1993 yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (pp. 116-133). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Goffman, E. (1967). Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior. New York: Pantheon.

Hargreaves, A. (1993). Individualism and individuality: Reinterpreting the teacher culture. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), Teachers' work (pp. 51-76). New York: Teachers College Press.

Hirschman, A. O. (1970). Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kahne, J. (1994). Democratic communities, equity, and excellence: A Deweyan reframing of educational policy analysis. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 16(3), 233-248.

Lichenstein, G., McLaughlin, M. W., & Knudsen, J. (1991). Teacher empowerment and professional knowledge. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), The changing contexts of teaching: 91st yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (pp. 37-58). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989). Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools. New York: Longman.